

What is claimed is:

1. A wheel assembly comprising:
a rim for a tire;
a hub comprising a central portion and a connecting portion radiating from the central portion to the rim, wherein the central portion is provided with a plurality of lug holes through which lug studs pass when a rear side of the central portion is mounted against an axle hub of a motor vehicle; and
a functioning clock mounted to a front side of the connecting portion of the hub so as to conceal the lug holes from view.
2. The wheel assembly according to claim 1 wherein the orientation of at least a face portion of the functioning clock does not appear to substantially change as the hub is rotated.
3. The wheel assembly according to claim 2 wherein the functioning clock further comprises a bezel portion that frames the face portion, and a transparent or translucent crystal portion that contacts the bezel portion and covers and protects the face portion.
4. The wheel assembly according to claim 2 wherein the face portion of the functioning clock comprises an analog clock having an hour hand and a minute hand.
5. The wheel assembly according to claim 4 wherein the hour hand and minute hand are formed on the face portion by an electroluminescent display.
6. The wheel assembly according to claim 3 wherein the bezel portion is mounted to the connecting portion of the hub using at least one lockable fastener.
7. The wheel assembly according to claim 1 wherein the hub and rim are integrally formed of metal.

8. The wheel assembly according to claim 2 further comprising a light source for illuminating the face portion of the functioning clock and a power source for providing power to the light source.

9. The wheel assembly according to claim 8 further comprising a controller for switching power on and off from the power source to the light source.

10. The wheel assembly according to claim 9 further comprises a motion sensor for detecting when the hub is rotating and/or a photo sensor for detecting when the wheel assembly is in a low light environment, and wherein the controller switches on power from the power source to the light source when the motion sensor detects that the hub is rotating and/or the photo sensor detects that the wheel assembly is in a low light environment.

11. The wheel assembly according to claim 10 wherein the controller does not switch off power from the power source to the light source until a predetermined period of time has elapsed after the motion sensor detects that the hub has stopped rotating.

12. The wheel assembly according to claim 9 further comprising a first receiver for receiving signals from a hand-held remote control device, and wherein the controller switches power on or off from the power source to the light source based upon the signals received by the first receiver from the hand-held remote control device.

13. The wheel assembly according to claim 9 further comprising a second receiver for receiving a transmitted time signal transmitted, and wherein the controller adjusts the time displayed by the functioning clock to match the transmitted time signal received by the receiver.

14. The wheel assembly according to claim 1 wherein the connecting portion of the hub comprises a bracket portion for removably mounting the functional clock to the hub.

15. The wheel assembly according to claim 1 wherein the bracket portion is adapted to receive any one of a plurality of interchangeable functional clocks that have a different appearance.

16. The wheel assembly according to claim 3 wherein the face portion of the functioning clock is encased within a substantially watertight sealed compartment defined by the bezel portion, the crystal portion and a back case portion connected to the bezel portion.

17. The wheel assembly according to claim 16 wherein the bezel portion is mounted to the connecting portion of the hub and the face portion is provided with a plurality of roller bearings configured to contact an inner annular bearing surface formed in the bezel portion, the back case portion or between the bezel portion and the back case portion, and wherein the inner annular bearing surface thereby supports the face portion of the functioning clock.

18. The wheel assembly according to claim 17 wherein a bottom hemisphere of the face portion is heavier than a top hemisphere of the face portion, the difference in weight being sufficient to maintain the vertical orientation of the face portion notwithstanding rotation of the hub.

19. The wheel assembly according to claim 1 wherein the connecting portion of the hub comprises a plurality of spokes that are spaced apart a predetermined distance such that when the connecting portion of the hub rotates at a substantially constant predetermined speed, an optical illusion is created whereby the plurality of spokes appear to a human observer to make about one clockwise revolution around the bezel portion of the functioning clock per minute.

20. A wheel assembly comprising:

a rim for a tire;

a hub integrally formed with the rim, the hub comprising a central portion and a connecting portion radiating from the central portion to the rim, wherein the central portion is provided with a plurality of lug holes through which lug studs pass when a rear side of the central portion is mounted against an axle hub of a motor vehicle; and

a functioning clock mounted to a front side of the connecting portion of the hub so as to conceal the lug holes from view, the functioning clock comprising:

a bezel portion;

a face portion framed by the bezel portion, the face portion comprising an analog clock having an hour hand and a minute hand;

a transparent or translucent crystal portion that contacts the bezel portion and covers and protects the face portion;

a back case portion that contacts the bezel portion and thus together with the crystal portion forms a substantially watertight enclosure within which the face portion is sealed;

a light source for illuminating the face portion of the functioning clock;

a power source for providing power to the light source;

a controller for switching power on and off from the power source to the light source; and

a motion sensor for detecting when the hub is rotating;

wherein the controller switches on power from the power source to the light source when the motion sensor detects that the hub is rotating and does not switch off power from the power source to the light source until a predetermined period of time has elapsed after the motion sensor detects that the hub has stopped rotating, and wherein the orientation of at least a face portion of the functioning clock does not appear to substantially change as the hub rotates.